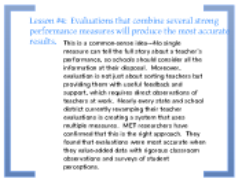


Introduction

There is no shortage of research on the importance of good teaching. A recent study that tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years determine that those with highly effective teachers "are more likely to attend college,earn higher salaries, live in better neighborhoods, and save more for retirement.

2009 Study – The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness

Four Key Lessons:

Lesson #1: Teachers generally appear to be managing their classrooms well, but are struggling with fundamental instructional skills. Using the Danielson Framework, three quarters of the teachers were rated proficient or higher at "managing classroom behavior" but only one third were proficient or distinguished or better in "communicating with students!"

Lesson #2: Classroom observations can give teachers valuable feedback, but are of limited value for predicting future performance.

Introduction

There is no shortage of research on the importance of good teaching. A recent study that tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years determine that those with highly effective teachers "are more likely to attend college,earn higher salaries, live in better neighborhoods, and save more for retirement.

Lesson #3: "Value-added analysis is more powerful than any other single measure of predicting a teacher's long term contributions to student success

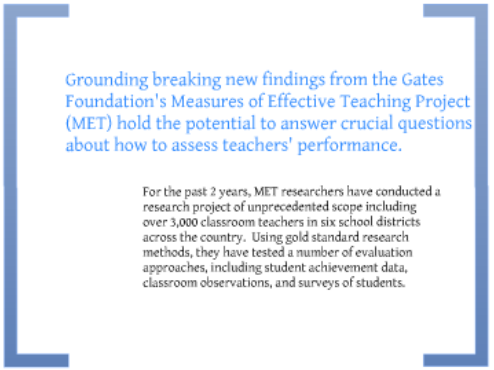
MET researchers found that value -added analysis, which typically uses test results to gauge how much an individual teacher contributes to his or her students' learning growth, ism ore accurate than any other SINGLE measure in predicting success over the course of a teacher's career—more than observations or student surveys. Teachers with high value-added score helped their students master higher-level thinking skills in addition to helping them score well on standardized tests. And, in surveys, students of high value-added teachers reported enjoying school more and trying hard on their coursework.

Lesson #4: Evaluations that combine several strong performance measures will produce the most accurate results.

This is a common-sense idea—No single measure can tell the full story about a teacher's performance, so schools should consider all the information at their disposal. Moreover, evaluation is not just about sorting teachers but providing them with useful feedback and support, which requires direct observations of teachers at work. Nearly every state and school district currently revamping their teacher evaluations is creating a system that uses multiple measures. MET researchers have confirmed that this is the right approach. They found that evaluations were most accurate when they value-added data with rigorous classroom observations and surveys of student perceptions.

2009 Study--The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness

Most teachers are evaluated infrequently and according to low standards. They rarely receive feedback that helps them improve. Nearly every teacher is labeled "good" or "great," no matter how much progress their students are making. In the end, the entire profession has suffered from this negligent approach.



Grounding breaking new findings from the Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project (MET) hold the potential to answer crucial questions about how to assess teachers' performance.

For the past 2 years, MET researchers have conducted a research project of unprecedented scope including over 3,000 classroom teachers in six school districts across the country. Using gold standard research methods, they have tested a number of evaluation approaches, including student achievement data, classroom observations, and surveys of students.

Four Key Lessons:

Lesson #1: Teachers generally appear to be managing their classrooms well, but are struggling with fundamental instructional skills.

Using the Danielson Framework, three quarters of the teachers were rated proficient or higher at "managing classroom behavior" but only one third were proficient or distinguished or better in "communicating with students!"

Lesson #2: Classroom observations can give teachers valuable feedback, but are of limited value for predicting future performance.

MET researchers found that it is extremely difficult to evaluate individual teachers accurately using classroom observations alone. The researchers were sure the observers were trained passing accuracy screens, used several rubrics, and conducted multiple observations of each teacher. Under these ideal conditions, they found that observation ratings did correlate somewhat with student achievement data. But no matter what they tried, observation ratings alone were not very predictive of at a teacher's future success at helping students learn.

Lesson #3: "Value-added analysis is more powerful than any other single measure of predicting a teacher's long term contributions to student success

MET researchers found that value -added analysis, which typically uses test results to gauge how much an individual teacher contributes to his or her students' learning growth, ism ore accurate than any other SINGLE measure in predicting success over the course of a teacher's career---more than observations or student surveys. Teachers with high value-added score helped their students master higher-level thinking skills in addition to helping them score well on standardized tests. And, in surveys, students of high value-added teachers reported enjoying school more and trying hard on their coursework.

Lesson #4: Evaluations that combine several strong performance measures will produce the most accurate results.

This is a common-sense idea---No single measure can tell the full story about a teacher's performance, so schools should consider all the information at their disposal. Moreover, evaluation is not just about sorting teachers but providing them with useful feedback and support, which requires direct observations of teachers at work. Nearly every state and school district currently revamping their teacher evaluations is creating a system that uses multiple measures. MET researchers have confirmed that this is the right approach. They found that evaluations were most accurate when they value-added data with rigorous classroom observations and surveys of student perceptions.

Five Recommendations for Policy Makers:

Recommendation #1: Base teacher evaluations on multiple measures of performance including data, on student academic progress.

Recommendation #2: Improve classroom observations by making them more frequent and robust.

Recommendation #3: Use or modify an existing observation rubric instead of trying to reinvent the wheel.

Recommendation #4: Give evaluators the training and ongoing support they need to be successful.

Recommendation #5: Strongly consider using student surveys as a component of teacher evaluation.

Conclusion:

We will never arrive at a perfect measure. Teaching is complex and multi-faceted; it draws on a broad array of professional skills. A teacher's performance is not static from day to day or from year to year. Our goal should be a fair, consistent approach to evaluation that gives schools and teachers the best possible information. The focus shifts now to the school level, where we have an opportunity to translate these finding into better practice.